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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: SWEDEN PREPARES TO LEAD ON CLIMATE ISSUES DURING EU  
PRESIDENCY -- WITH OPEN, FRIENDLY ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE U.S.

¶1. This cable contains action requests at para 8.

¶2. Summary. The Government of Sweden is organized to actively lead the EU during its Presidency, with the climate issue as its top priority -- and no close second. In a February 2 meeting between Embassy and Sweden's top climate officials, the tone towards the U.S. was open and friendly, and officials are keenly awaiting signs from the U.S. on our positions. EU positions are openly-worded at this point, they said, awaiting signals from Washington. Having said that, they cautioned that the "train is leaving the station" -- with substantive texts already circulating in the UNFCCC working groups. This cable lists some of the identified opportunities to engage with the GOS, and offers an extra opportunity in Washington on April 20-21. End summary.

¶3. Charge, Copenhagen ESTH hub officer Erik Hall, and Embassy officials met with two of Sweden's top climate officials on February 2: Ambassador Staffan Tillander, the Environment Ministry's Ambassador on Climate Change, and Lars-Erik Liljelund, Director General in the PM's office for climate policy and the Baltic Sea Strategy. They discussed opportunities for engagement in the coming months:

-- Last week of March, Washington: Sweden's Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren is planning to visit Washington D.C. together with his Czech counterpart (current and incoming Presidency of the EU). Current thinking is for them to visit the U.S. after the Nairobi meetings, in the last week of March (March 30-April 3).

-- April 16-20, Italy: G20 Environment Ministers meeting in Syracuse, April 16-20.

-- April 22, Washington: Liljelund told us about a seminar which the GOS will host in the House of Sweden, in Washington, D.C. on April 22. The seminar will report on the findings of a climate change study involving RFF, Resources for the Future, and Swedish and European institutions. State Secretary for Energy Ola Altera will participate in a policy panel in the afternoon on April 22.

-- Around May 20, Washington: Environment Minister Carlgren will visit Brazil in the week of May 18, after which he hopes to travel again to the U.S. The trip will conclude with a stop in Iceland for a Nordic Environment Ministers' meeting May 25-26 the following week.

-- July 8-10, Italy: The G8 Summit in La Maddalena on July 8-10, where Sweden will participate as the EU Presidency country.

-- July 23-25, Sweden: The GOS will invite Secretary of Energy Steven Chu to participate in the EU Energy and Environment Ministers Council in Are (northern Sweden) July 23-25. The formal invitation letter will go out shortly. The UNFCCC Secretariat has confirmed

that Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer will also attend the meeting.

-- September, New York: The Swedish Consulate in New York is working actively to organize a high-level event on climate change in New York in connection with UNGA. The ambition is to offer an event which can demonstrate U.S.-EU willingness to work together on the climate issue.

¶4. Liljelund asked when the USG position on climate change negotiations will be clear. The EU Council Conclusions, which will come in March and June, will need to be open-worded, awaiting U.S. signals, Liljelund opined. Tillander cautioned that the "train is already rolling", with negotiations over concrete texts in the UNFCCC working groups underway already in February, for example on long-term cooperative action. Liljelund and Tillander said that we need to let each other know what to expect from each other.

¶5. The EU Council Conclusions in March will elaborate on financing aspects. The June Council Conclusions will need to be more concrete. During the Swedish Presidency, there will be an EU Summit in early November, which will deal with the Lisbon Treaty and climate change; and then the last Summit of the year which will take place during the negotiation sessions of COP-15. That will be the last opportunity to change the negotiation mandate. Liljelund told us the GOS will closely monitor, and interpret, U.S. signals and actions in the climate area.

¶6. Regarding the internal Swedish climate change organization, Liljelund noted that Environment Minister Carlgren has primary responsibility. Due to the many Heads of State opportunities this year, including COP-15 which PM Reinfeldt will definitely attend, the PM's office needs to be closely involved as well. Anders

STOCKHOLM 00000069 002 OF 002

Turesson from the Environment Ministry will remain in his position as Sweden's chief negotiator.

¶7. Liljelund told us that the GOS is working closely with its Danish counterparts. This is aided by a close personal relationship between the two PM's. An official in the PM's office works half-time for the Danish Environment Ministry. Liljelund commented that the Danes will "distance themselves a little" from the EU as COP-15 draws closer -- in its role of UN host, whereas Sweden will be at COP-15 representing the EU.

¶8. Action requests:

-- Tillander told us the G20 Environment Ministers will meet in Syracuse, Italy, April 16-20. The GOS expressed interest in knowing who will head the U.S. delegation to the meeting.

-- While reviewing meeting opportunities prior to COP-15, we discussed the possible opportunity to compare notes on climate policy on the margins of the Joint Committee meeting under the Umbrella Science and Technology Agreement between Sweden and the U.S. -- which will take place at the State Department on April 20-21. Our GOS interlocutors expressed interest in pursuing this possibility. Post would appreciate hearing about interest in such an opportunity from main State.

SILVERMAN